

News from the Illinois Commerce Commission

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ICC Starts Comprehensive Investigation Into Ameren's Systems, Reliability ***Tree-trimming, Transmission and Distribution, Storm Restoration to be Reviewed***

A detailed, long-range investigation into Ameren's physical infrastructure, maintenance programs, planning and communications and outage restoration activities is necessary to determine the overall health and viability of Ameren's systems in the state, the Illinois Commerce Commission determined today.

The comprehensive investigation will determine if the severity and duration of these outages could have been minimized or even prevented, following two major power outages in 2006 (wind storms of July 19 and 21, and the ice storm of Nov. 30). According to a plan submitted by ICC staff to the commission today, a consultant will be hired to investigate Ameren's transmission and distribution systems, vegetation management and outage restoration activities for the Commission.

The consultant, retained by the Commission and paid by the Ameren Illinois utilities, will investigate, analyze and report to the Commission:

- The physical condition of Ameren's transmission and distribution systems immediately prior to the wind storms of July 19 and 21, 2006, and to the ice storm of Nov 30, 2006;
- Actions, if any, Ameren should have taken prior to those storms, including vegetation management, to maintain their transmission and distribution systems in an appropriate condition, according to applicable National Electric Safety Code (NESC) standards and good utility practices, to withstand adverse weather conditions;
- Actions, if any, Ameren should take in the future, including vegetation management, to bring their transmission and distribution systems to an appropriate condition, according to applicable NESC standards and good utility practices, to withstand adverse weather conditions;
- Ameren's prior planning for and execution of transmission and distribution system restoration following the July and November storms; and,
- Monitoring of Ameren's progress in implementing the consultant's recommendations, whether agreed to by Ameren or required by the Commission, and Ameren's own initiatives, regarding future work, if any, required to bring its transmission and distribution system into compliance with applicable NESC standards and good utility practices.

The initial investigation, analysis and report will take one year to complete. At that time, the conclusions and recommendations will be presented to the ICC. Pending the outcome of the investigative report, an additional three years of monitoring may be ordered by the Commission at that time.

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